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The Case against Socialism

Plainly stated for the Man in the Street.

By
WILLIAM
BEANLAND.

London and Felling-on-Tyne:
THE WALTER SCOTT PUBLISHING CO., LTD.
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PREFACE.

I DESIRE to have it distinctly understood that an objection to Socialism and an aversion to Socialistic legislation does not necessarily imply contentment with the existing state of affairs. I am not one of those who calmly and placidly tell you "We are very well as we are." We are *not* very well as we are. There are many anomalies to be removed, many wrongs to be redressed, much useless suffering to be relieved. But there is no one remedy which will cure all the ills of the body politic, just as there is no one remedy which will cure all diseases of the physical body, although many quack nostrums are advertised which make this claim.

Socialism is the "purple pill" of politics, warranted by those who prescribe it to be a sure and certain cure for the manifold social evils which civilization has brought in its train. I propose very briefly to examine its claims.

This little work is not intended to be a text-book for the student. He has been amply catered for by other writers, such as Mr. W. H. Mallock and Mr. Max Hirsch, and to these I wish to acknowledge my own deep indebtedness. My

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efforts are entirely for the benefit of him who will suffer most under the rule of a Socialist State, and who—least apprehending the dangers and fallacies of Socialism—is most liable to be attracted by the Pinchbeck Paradise which is promised by Socialist orators. I appeal, as they appeal, to the Man in the Street. Let him read and judge between us.

WM. BEANLAND.

CONEYSTHORPE,
MALTON,
March, 1909.

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THE CASE AGAINST SOCIALISM

Plainly stated for the Man in the Street.

CHAPTER I.

SOCIALISTIC FALLACIES.

THE whole theory of Socialism is based upon fallacious assumptions. It is a harmful prescription caused by a mistaken diagnosis. I have heard open-air orators secure enthusiastic applause by an energetic advocacy of the theory that "labour produces all, and, therefore, as a matter of abstract justice, has a right to all." The Socialist speaker delights in contrasts; he pictures on the one hand a few bloated capitalists, and on the other the proletariat—vast riches and unspeakable poverty—and takes no account of the infinite gradations between. Let us examine his statement. Does labour produce all wealth, and, if not all, what proportion? The production of wealth in this country has vastly increased during the last hundred years, and yet fifty labourers working to-day cannot by their own unaided efforts produce any more than the same

number of men could have produced a hundred years ago. If the carpenter, the shoemaker, or the navvy had to use exactly the same instruments as their forefathers, they could not use them with any greater efficiency. The agricultural labourer of to-day cannot dig up a larger area of land in a given time than his predecessors. The same argument applies to all departments of industry. And yet fifty men to-day can and do produce thirty, forty, and a hundredfold more than they could have produced if they had lived a hundred years ago. The reason is obvious. The brain of the inventor has brought forth mechanical contrivances and labour-saving devices which have vastly increased the productive power of the labourer. The labourer has not done it himself; it has been done for him, and, therefore, the vast increase in production during the period referred to must not be credited to labour, but to another factor called ability.

We must also remember that businesses are now much better organized than they were, and that this also is due to the exercise of ability. In computing, therefore, the causes of the production of wealth, we have to reckon, besides labour, both inventive and directive ability. Nor must we forget that as the use of capital is essential to all business enterprise, the man who supplies the capital—even if he does nothing else—has contributed towards production, and may

justly claim some reward. I think it is possible by means of an illustration to form some idea as to how much is due to labour and how much to ability in the case I shall quote. Let us suppose that a firm of manufacturers give a contract to a builder for the erection of a mill. The contractor employs five hundred men and takes eighteen months to complete the contract. The firm of manufacturers afterwards require another mill erecting, the exact counterpart of the first, and decide to employ the same contractor. Unfortunately, however, the contractor has died, but his successor obtains the job. He employs exactly the same men as his predecessor. They work the same number of hours, and are paid the same wages. The second building is an exact duplicate of the first, but it is finished in fifteen months instead of eighteen. Clearly, then, the productive power of the labourers has been greater, not because they put forth more strenuous efforts or worked longer hours, but because their efforts were directed and supervised by the second employer with greater ability than was displayed by the first. It must be obvious, then, that in this case the *whole* of the increase in the productive power of the labourers was due to ability, and not to labour at all. What, then, becomes of the Socialist contention that labour produces all? Like most Socialist arguments, it is a fallacy. Although many Socialist orators are

ignorant of the fact, the theory referred to was first propounded by Karl Marx as the result of a long and scientific study of economics.

The ordinary tub-thumping Socialist finds it good business to appeal to the cupidity of the masses. They are not slow to believe that they are not getting their fair share of the national wealth, and that they have been defrauded of their rights. Marx, however, held this theory in all seriousness, and used it as a foundation upon which to erect his scheme for the Socialist State. He advanced as an argument in favour of his theory that owing to the increased productive power of labour, the labourer could now—if he were allowed to retain the entire produce of his labour—maintain himself by working half or even a quarter as long each day as he would have had to work a hundred years ago.

Clearly, the labourer of to-day produces each day more than sufficient to maintain himself and his family for that day. Then what becomes of the surplus? Marx believes it to be wrongfully annexed by the capitalist. Of course, if labour *did* produce all wealth, and could continue to produce all wealth without the aid of capital and without being dependent on directive ability, then Marx would be right. But, as we have seen, labour is not responsible for all—and in the case I have just quoted was not responsible for any part of—the recent increase in the production of

wealth. It seems to me only fair to recognize that three factors are necessary for the production of wealth, and that each should have its fair share of remuneration—viz., labour, capital, and directive ability. Capital is no use without labour, nor is labour any good without capital—and remember that as soon as the labourer owns a spade he is possessed of capital. We also need not demonstrate that which is perfectly obvious, that labour, undirected, or unwisely directed, may not only not produce any wealth at all, but even result in loss of capital.

I was born in a manufacturing district, and am perfectly certain that if all the capitalists in that district were to make a present to their work-people of all the mills, spinning frames, looms, and woolcombing machines, and, moreover, to provide an ample supply of capital to run those mills, and then hand them over to their employees, the capital would be lost in a very short time, because there would not be sufficient directive ability to guide and direct the efforts of the labourers, to keep in touch with the markets, and to provide for and even anticipate the wants of the public.

Surely, then, we can put aside as an exploded fallacy the theory that labour produces all and has a right to all. But how is the labourer to obtain his fair share of the wealth which he helps to produce? He can obtain it, and is obtaining

it, by a natural evolution. Let me quote an example from Mr. W. H. Mallock (*Labour and the Popular Welfare*). "In 1843, when Queen Victoria had been six or seven years on the throne, the gross income of the nation was in round numbers five hundred and fifteen million pounds. Of this, two hundred and thirty-five million pounds went to the labouring classes, and the remainder, two hundred and eighty million pounds, to the classes that paid income tax. Only fifty years have elapsed since that time, and, according to the best authority, the income of the labouring classes now is certainly not less than six hundred and sixty million pounds. That is to say, it exceeds by a hundred and forty-five million pounds the entire income of the nation fifty years ago. An allowance, however, must be made for the increase in the number of the labourers. That is, of course, obvious, and we will at once proceed to make it. But when it is made, the case is hardly less wonderful. The labouring classes in 1843 numbered twenty-six millions. At the present time they number thirty-three millions. That is to say, they have increased by seven million persons. Now assuming, as we have done, that Labour by itself produces as much as fourteen pounds per head of the population,[1] this addition of seven million

[1] At the close of the eighteenth century the income of Great Britain with a population of ten millions was about

persons will account for an addition of ninety-eight million pounds to the five hundred and fifteen million pounds, which was the amount of the national income fifty years ago. We must therefore, to make our comparisons accurate, deduct ninety-eight million pounds from the hundred and forty-five million pounds just mentioned, which will leave us an addition of forty-seven million pounds. We may now say, without any reservation, that the labouring classes of this country, in proportion to their number, receive to-day forty-seven million pounds a year more than the entire income of the country at the beginning of the reign of Queen Victoria. . . . The same number of labourers and their families as then formed the whole labouring population of the country now possess among them every penny of the amount that then formed the income of the entire nation."

I think it must be admitted that Mr. Mallock has in this illustration proved clearly and conclusively that labour is getting year by year a larger and larger share of the national income.

I remarked at the commencement of this chapter that the Socialist orator delights in contrasts, and finds them very effective arguments when he addresses unthinking crowds. I have heard street-

a hundred and forty million pounds, or fourteen pounds per head for the entire population, but for the sake of argument it is assumed that *labour produced it all.*

corner speakers mention by name a certain mill-owner who possesses a carriage and pair, and ask how it was that he could ride in luxury through the streets whilst his hearers had to tramp through the mud and slush.

We will suppose that the employer referred to is making £2,000 per year, and that he employs five hundred workpeople. He provides all the capital, takes all risks of loss, and steers the business through all the shoals and quicksands of commerce, often paying wages not out of income, but out of capital. His reward is for the use of his capital and for providing the directive ability which supervises and controls the efforts of his workpeople. Suppose he raises the wages of everybody in his employ one shilling per week. This will be very little good to the workpeople. They will still have to tramp through the mud and slush, but the increase in the wage bill will absorb £1,300 per year, and the employer will have to walk also or hire a cab occasionally. Thus we see that arguments based upon these startling contrasts, though effective and popular, possess very little value as arguments.

Another favourite argument of the Socialist party is that the rental of the land of this country is absorbed by a few rich men whom it would be no crime to rob of their ill-gotten wealth.

Now what are the facts? We will assume a large landowner to be a man who owns a thousand

acres. In 1878 these "large landowners" received a rental of twenty-nine million pounds, whilst seventy million pounds was divided among nine hundred and fifty thousand smaller owners.

Let the working man make no mistake. By any legislation which confiscates the land of this country the working classes who are interested in friendly societies, co-operative societies, building societies, and other institutions, and also those who are fortunate enough to own the cottage in which they live, will be the first to suffer.

The same result would follow an attack upon the large railway companies, in whose shares numerous small investors are interested.

The result would be to satisfy the cupidity of the thriftless and incapable among the workers by robbing the thrifty and capable; surely an unwise thing to do, and one not calculated to encourage thrift and energy amongst the masses of the people. One Socialist fallacy which is hard to kill is that all that a man possesses which he has not earned by the labour of his own hands is "unearned increment."

If this be true, then the working classes obtain a very large amount of this "unearned increment."

Any unskilful or lazy workman who is receiving the same rate of pay as his more energetic and skilful comrade must be receiving unearned increment. And yet this very state of affairs is encouraged by the Trades Unions.

But surely the man who uses his business knowledge and foresight to buy or sell wool, currants, copper, stocks and shares, land, or anything else, is entitled to reap the reward of his ability. He takes the risk. He backs his judgment by adventuring his capital. If he loses, he obtains no sympathy. If he wins, he has earned his reward as fairly and justly as the man who has made a table or a coat, and receives payment for doing so. In one case the reward is for mental labour and in the other for physical. In neither case is it unearned increment. The Socialist party as a body do not seem to understand the illusive nature of wealth. To them the wealth of the country is a vast treasure-house protected by a feeble minority of the population, who could easily be overpowered by the majority and the aforesaid wealth appropriated. Let us suppose that the mansion of a millionaire were to be looted by the mob. How much would they get? In hard cash, very little. There would be valuable pictures, costly furniture, priceless objects of art and vertu, etc., etc.; but the realizable value of these depends upon the maintenance of a competitive system of society.

They are worth the market value and no more. One rich man may give a fabulous price for a picture, because he has set his mind upon possessing it; whilst another rich man may be also eager to secure it, and between the two the price is

raised very rapidly. Competition fixes the value, but in the hands of the mob this value would disappear; there would be little to divide: wealth would take unto itself wings and fly away.

In the same manner, if all the wealth in this country were confiscated by Parliament and a Socialist order of government inaugurated, a very large portion of that wealth would disappear and be of no use whatever for carrying on the work of the country and supporting the people.

Another fallacy embodied in the Socialist creed is that the State can control a business organization with more efficiency and economy than a private firm.

There is absolutely no foundation for this belief. What department of the State is not hampered by red tape? In what Government organization are the officials more anxious to anticipate and provide for the wants of the public than would be the owners of a private firm? The Socialist will be sure to instance the Post Office. But the State did not take the initiative in this matter and inaugurate our postal system to fulfil a public need. The public were being catered for in this matter by private enterprise, but the State stepped in and declared that the right to carry letters was a monopoly of the Duke of York. This is characteristic of Government organizations. They dare not face competition with private enterprise. They must have a monopoly or they could not

live. We are not, therefore, even justified in saying that the carrying of letters by the State is done more economically and efficiently than it could be done by private enterprise. Private enterprise in this matter was arbitrarily extinguished and given no chance to compete.

With regard to parcels, however, the case is different. A number of private firms undertake the collection and distribution of these, and their methods compare very favourably with those of the Post Office. At Christmas time the walls of every post office are placarded with frantic appeals to the public to "post early," or their packages may be delayed in transmission. At the same time the private firms foresee the extra strain upon their resources, provide for it, and efficiently carry on their work without any fuss and without any appealing placards.

The War Office and the Admiralty can certainly not be regarded as economical or efficient institutions, and the State administration of the Poor Laws cannot justly be admired for either of these qualities.

It is against reason and common sense to suppose that the abolition of competition and the substitution of a monopoly will work either for efficiency or economy.

When two or more private firms are competing for the patronage of the public, then the wants of the public are not only provided for, but must

be anticipated by those who control such firms or they will fall behind in the race for public favour.

I must now close this chapter on Socialistic Fallacies, not because I have mentioned them all—that would be impossible. The whole Socialistic propaganda is carried on by means of fallacious assumptions. They are all easily exposed, but because of their exceeding great number, many of them must escape so far as this book is concerned. The common sense of my readers, however, will easily detect them.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

Socialism is very difficult to define, because the Socialists themselves are by no means unanimous. To quote the words of the late Lord Salisbury, "Where they are precise, they are not agreed, and where they are agreed, they are not precise." Many people have an idea that Socialism means an equal division of the wealth of the nation amongst the people of the nation; that at some given time we should all make a fresh start possessed of the same amount of money. But, whatever else Socialism may mean, it certainly does not mean that, but something very different. If an equal division of the wealth of the country were made to-day, it would be very unequally divided by to-morrow.

Although there is much difference of opinion among Socialist writers, the vast majority advocate the abolition of private property and the substitution of State ownership. They believe that the widespread poverty and intense suffering which undoubtedly exist to-day are attributable to the tyrannical despotism and insatiable greed of landowners and capitalists. Prince Krapotkin, a

Russian Socialist, put the case as follows:— "A feeble minority lays claim to the bulk of the national wealth; has town and country houses built for itself, and accumulates in banks the coin, notes, and documents of all sorts which represent the wealth produced by labour. All this we must seize, and by one and the same blow we shall set free the unhappy peasant whose plot of ground is burdened by a mortgage, the small shopkeeper who lives in a constant dread of bankruptcy, and a wretched crowd of persons who have not bread enough for the morrow."

"We must clearly see that private property is a conscious or an unconscious theft of that which belongs to all, and we must be prepared to seize all with alacrity for the common use and benefit." In a small pamphlet, entitled "The Manifesto of the Socialist League," Messrs. Wm. Morris and E. Belfort Bax say, "The land, the capital, the machinery, factories, workshops, stores, means of transit, mines, banking, *all means of production and distribution of wealth* must be declared and treated as the common property of all."

The Social Democratic Federation (England) states its objects to be:—

"The Socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange to be controlled by a democratic State in the interests of the entire community, and the complete emancipation of labour from the domination of capitalization and

landlordism, with the establishment of social and economic equality between the sexes."

In the *Fabian Essays* it is shortly stated that Socialism is "the common holding of the means of production and exchange, and the holding of them for the equal benefit of all."

Some Socialists endeavour to draw a distinction between capital and wealth. Mrs. Besant defines wealth as "the accumulated, unconsumed result of labour applied to raw material so long as it is not attempted to utilize such result for profit."

As soon as it is used for purposes of profit, it becomes capital and would belong to the State.

For example, suppose—

(1) A man spent every penny of his income. He would be secure from molestation.

(2) He saved ten pounds per year and treasured it up in an old stocking. That would be wealth, and he would be perfectly justified in keeping it.

(3) He invested the ten pounds in oranges and paid another man to hawk them. His wealth would be turned into capital because it was utilized for profit, and his stock of oranges would be liable to confiscation by the State. However, Mrs. Besant is not in accord with the main body of Socialist opinion, and we need not consider her ideas at length.

Taking into consideration the opinions of the

best known writers upon the subject, I should define Socialism as being—"The abolition of private property in land, raw material, instruments of production, funded capital, etc. All these would belong to the State, which would also direct all labour and compel the equitable distribution of the produce of such labour."

It will be seen, therefore, that Socialism means a revolution—either peaceful or otherwise. It proposes altogether to abolish the existing competitive system of society, and to replace it by an altogether new and untried system. In view of this speculative and experimental character of Socialism, cautious politicians are very much inclined to cheerfully and courageously "bear the ills we have than fly to others which we know not of."

One thing is certain. Socialism cannot be regarded as scientific. Any political system to be scientific must be based upon recognized natural laws.

Socialists altogether deny that any material laws govern the production and distribution of wealth, and propose to control these functions by arbitrary State regulations. If there is no such natural law, then Socialism is unscientific because it cannot be based upon science. If, on the other hand, a natural law exists which governs the production and distribution of wealth, then Socialism is unscientific because it refuses to recognize such law. Upon which horn of this dilemma will Socialists impale themselves?

CHAPTER III.

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES.

Is Socialism practical? If the vast majority of the electors cast their votes in favour of Socialism, and a government were returned to power pledged to abolish individualism and to set up a Socialist State, would they be able to overcome the host of practical difficulties which would beset their path? I think not. But let us consider some of these difficulties. In the first place, the Socialist displays a total ignorance of human nature. Think what a vast and complex machine the Socialist State would be. It would be necessary in order to ensure smooth working that every man should behave exactly as the State officials had calculated that he would behave. Any irregularity would upset their plans and cause confusion.

And this is exactly where Socialism would fail. Steel and iron are simpler things than flesh and blood. You may foretell with practical certainty the action of a machine, but it is impossible to foretell with any degree of accuracy a man's action in any conceivable circumstances. If men and

women were so many automata, then the case would be different, but, as it is, the very uncertainty of human action would be an insuperable barrier to the smooth working of a Socialist mode of government.

Seeing that the State would control both production and distribution, how would it regulate the supply of the different commodities which the public would desire? At present the supply adjusts itself to the demand. This is a natural law. The producer is controlled by the consumer.

Whatever goods are demanded by the consumer the producer will supply. Nay, he will go further than this, for the producers will compete amongst themselves to anticipate the demand, and because of this competition the consumer benefits.

Whenever the demand for any particular commodity is greater or less than the average, the supply increases or decreases accordingly. How does a bootmaker, for example, know how many pairs of boots to make every week? He is guided by the number he sold during the previous week, by his knowledge of the locality, and by his experience that at certain times of the year the demand for his goods increases or decreases. He uses his judgment and gains or loses as his judgment proves accurate or otherwise.

But how would the demand be ascertained in a Socialist community? Schäffle says, "by continuous official returns furnished by the managers

and overseers of the selling and producing departments."

How these officials would have to bestir themselves. How they would cudgel their brains to think out new designs for suitings which might please the taste of the public. What an uproar would take place in the ironmongery department when the officials vied with one another to produce a more effective potato peeler or a more æsthetic lamp shade.

The scene in the millinery and dressmaking department would certainly beggar description. In all departments what competition there would be amongst the officials to provide for, and even to anticipate, the wishes of the public. To anyone who has had experience of State officials I would put the question, "Is it likely?"

I have had the experience of walking into a chemist's shop which was also licensed as a post-office. The proprietor hurried to greet me under the impression that I was a likely purchaser of his famous hair restorer, corn cure, pink pill, or some article upon which he would realize a reasonable profit. His face was wreathed in smiles which vanished like snowflakes before the sun when I meekly requested him to supply me with a postage stamp. This is human nature. The private trader strenuously endeavours to please the public because his own livelihood depends upon the success of his efforts. But these high and mighty

officials, "the managers and overseers of the selling and producing departments," would they be so anxious to meet the public needs? Again I say, "not likely." Under a competitive system, if I do not get satisfied by one shopkeeper, I transfer my custom to his rival. The shopkeeper knows this, and endeavours to meet my wishes. But when the State is the *only* shopkeeper, we shall have to be content with the commodities supplied by the State, or be satisfied by the pleasing alternative, we can do without. Certainly! and under Socialism we should often have to. The inevitable result would be that the State would never seriously try to meet the wishes of the consumers. The Clothing Department would bring out a nice, neat uniform, and we should have to wear that, whether we liked it or not. It would be so much easier for the Government officials, so why should we grumble. The Grocery Department would keep certain articles of diet, and we should have to subsist upon those whether they were palatable or otherwise. All departments would have their stock list of commodities, and the officials would care very little about the public demand for other articles. If the consumers of this country are foolish enough to throw away their privilege of transferring their custom from one trader to another when the first cannot or will not supply their demands, and to trust themselves to the tender mercies of a State Monopoly

without any alternative, then they will richly deserve all they will get. Under Socialism it will be a case of "shut your eyes and open your mouth, and see what your dear grandmother, the State, sends you."

Another difficulty arises. By what method would the different classes of work be assigned to the individual workers? At present the State is not burdened by the responsibility of finding individual employment. Each worker decides for himself and has to face the consequences. He is largely influenced in his decision by the very practical question, "In what particular sphere of labour shall I be most likely to obtain permanent employment?" It is not so much a question of what class of work would I prefer, but in what department of industry can I most readily find employment and earn a livelihood? If it were a question of choice, how many people would perform unskilled labour and devote themselves to physical work of a laborious and exhausting nature, when they could remain clean and well-dressed and occupy themselves with lighter tasks? Now, it is not what we should like, but what we can get. But under Socialism the work of each individual would be assigned to him by the State.

What a task for any Government to face. What a clamour and uproar there would be. Everybody would have as good a right as anybody

else to the lighter and pleasanter employments, and there would be a general refusal to do the rougher physical work. Who would be scavengers or navvies when they could be town clerks, artists, or judges? And yet the rougher work must be done. Who is to do it? Would the majority combine and compel any particular class to do it? No! says the Socialist, "force would not be necessary. We should hold out shorter hours as an inducement. Those engaged on laborious tasks would not be required to work so long as others who were more pleasantly employed." If I know anything of human nature—and I think I do—I can state with confidence that the inducement would be altogether inadequate. Remember that the great majority who earn their living by physical labour would certainly wish to change, whilst those who now have light and pleasant employment would not wish to change. It is obvious that the Socialist Government at the very commencement of its task of industrial organization would have to coerce the workers to accept their appointed tasks. This would breed discontent, and thus would the seeds of revolution be sown.

And what about those who refused to work at all, either from sheer laziness or because they were dissatisfied with the task assigned to them? Under Individualism they would be spurred on by the necessity of obtaining bread. If they did not work they would starve, except in the case of

those whose forefathers had accumulated sufficient wealth to maintain them without labour.

How would it be under Socialism? Can the Socialists find a more effectual inducement to labour than fear of starvation? If not, then where is the advantage of their system in this respect? If they have an alternative, it must necessarily be direct coercion, which would be found impracticable.

Then again, suppose that the recruiting for the great industrial armies was satisfactorily completed, and every state department fully supplied with the necessary workpeople. Where would the State find the men of organizing power and directive ability to supervise and control the labourers?

Unless the work of production and distribution was directed as efficiently by State officials as it is at present by private enterprise, there would be a great falling off in the volume of national production. How would the State pick out the men who were not only willing but able efficiently to direct the labour of the nation? And when it had found them, how would it induce them to use their capacity for business organization and to labour in the service of the State as arduously as they do now for themselves?

Clearly it would be a short way out of the difficulty if those men who have proved their capacity by successfully managing large business

concerns under private enterprise should be elected as State officials to carry out the same duties. But would they be elected, and if elected, would they act?

They would be by no means certain of election. It is natural for every man to believe that, given a fair chance, he could manage the business concerns of Rockfeller, Carnegie, or Lipton as well as they do themselves. Believing this, he would try to secure election as a director of labour, and as the election would be by the votes of the majority, who are not capable of intelligently weighing one man's qualifications against those of another as regards directive business ability, the election would be a mere farce. The best man would have very little chance of selection, and the whole business might just as well be settled by drawing lots. But let us suppose that by some chance the State supervisors of labour were elected from the ranks of our successful business men, would they accept the position and put forth all their energies and use all their abilities to increase the production of different State departments just as they would if these State departments were their own private business concerns? I think not. There would not be sufficient inducement for them to do so. At present they are induced to labour because labour brings with it pecuniary profit for themselves. By the exercise of their abilities they accumulate

wealth, which also means power, social position, luxury, and enjoyment, and the ability to provide the means for their descendants to live in a similar manner.

This would be impossible under Socialism, and, therefore, it is not reasonable to suppose that those who possess exceptional business abilities would exercise them to the same extent on behalf of the State as they do now for their own private profit. Thus we can take it for granted that under Socialism there would be a serious falling off in the productive power of the nation as compared with our present competitive system. Let me re-state briefly my reasons for this assertion.

First, it is a matter of the highest importance that the best directive ability of the nation should direct the efforts of the labourers; for labour undirected or badly directed means a great loss of productive power. No one will seriously dispute this. Secondly, the best directive ability of the nation will not be allowed to direct the efforts of the labourers under Socialism, and, if allowed, would not consent in the absence of any reasonable inducement. It is perfectly certain that when labour directors were elected some glib demagogue or some popular numskull would obtain the votes of the crowd as against an unpopular man of ability who had nothing but his ability to recommend him. Thus at the very

outset the Socialist state would be handicapped. Its vast industrial armies would be badly officered, and this would be as disastrous in commercial matters as it is in military matters.

When the State had assigned each individual worker his appointed task, and also elected supervisors to direct the labourers, another difficulty would arise. How are the labourers to be rewarded? Upon this question Socialists themselves are at variance. The labourers could be rewarded in three different ways:—

(1) According to ability.
(2) According to need.
(3) Equally.

The first method would be fair if those who had to determine the ability displayed were capable and unprejudiced, but as they will be elected by the votes of the majority who are not certain to detect capacity they may be incapable. They are certain to be prejudiced in favour of those who voted for them and against those who voted for rival candidates.

The second and third methods are manifestly unfair. Each method is advocated strenuously by various schools of Socialists. Which will be adopted? Each method would certainly breed discontent among the workers. According to the first method, the judges would have to compute the value of each labourer's work and arbitrarily fix his remuneration. It is not at all likely that

their decisions would give any measure of satisfaction. In every workshop the great majority of the workers would honestly believe that their services were worth as much to the State as those of their more capable comrades who produced more and were, therefore, paid more. There would be discontent if the judges were absolutely capable and impartial, but as they are not likely to be either, and would be almost certain to make blunders and commit acts of favouritism, the discontent would be both active and widespread.

The second method—payment according to need without regard to the value of the labourers' work—is advocated by Dr. Schäffle and the German Social Democrats, but the majority of English Socialists are against him.

It would be almost impossible to determine the "reasonable needs" of any labourer, and the judges who had to make the decision would have an unenviable task. However well they fulfilled it, they could not hope to give satisfaction. Each man naturally magnifies his needs. If honestly carried out, this method would allot larger incomes to old and feeble workers than to young and capable ones, which would be manifestly absurd. Those who produced least would get most. This method might work well in the topsy-turvy Utopia of a comic opera, but could not be carried out in real life. The Socialist State would

take the shortest way out of the difficulty and reward everybody equally, whether their services to the State were great or small. This would certainly lead to a great falling off in the national production of wealth. Uniformity of payment would mean, and always has meant, competition in idleness. There would be no incentive for the industrious and capable worker to put forth his best efforts, for however hard and intelligently he worked, he would get the same reward as the laziest and most ignorant of his comrades. Piece work is the fairest, and promotes industry and intelligence and increased production, whilst equal payments mean a general slackening of effort. Under Socialism, piece work would be impossible, and I must again repeat that the first result of the Socialization of labour *would be a great falling off in the national production of wealth.*

Certainly it does not seem a bright prospect for the worker who demands a greater share of the national wealth. Adopt Socialism, which will seriously lessen production, and then the labourer will get more, is neither sound logic or common sense. I want the man in the street to realize the fallacious nature of the promises which the Socialist holds out to him. They promise a great deal, but in view of the difficulties pointed out, how are they going to fulfil those promises?

I will mention one more difficulty, and then I must bring this chapter to a close. The Socialists

propose to abolish the coinage. Their reason is obvious. If money, or its equivalent, were allowed to circulate, the capitalist system would soon begin to rear its head again. At the end of the first week the thrifty would have saved part of their wages; the improvident would have spent all, and perhaps borrowed some. The lazy would have paid the industrious for labour performed. All sorts of commodities would be bought and sold, personal property recognized once more, and Socialism hopelessly undermined.

No payments would be made in money, but entirely in certificates of labour time. Karl Marx —the pioneer of scientific Socialism—has estimated the price of a hectolitre of wheat at five days of socially determined labour, supposing everybody worked eight hours per day.

This reminds me of a village genius who calmly announced to the local community that he had calculated the distance between the earth and the moon to be one hundred and twenty-eight million miles. When asked how he arrived at the figures, he stated that he guessed a quarter the distance, and then multiplied it by four. I have no means of checking Marx's estimate, but even supposing it to be correct, how could such a cumbersome system be carried out?

It would be necessary to know the *average* number of hours needed to produce a given quantity of any given commodity. Will any

enthusiastic Socialist of a mathematical turn of mind tell me how many days of how many hours per day it takes to produce a ton of turnips or a stack of hay? How many hours per day and how many days does it take to prepare a bullock or a sheep for the market? How many hours per day should Millais work to produce an Academy picture, or Marconi to complete his invention of wireless telegraphy? How could we ascertain the relative value of an hour in a sailor's working day compared with an hour worked by a policeman, a gas inspector, a town clerk, or a shop assistant?

It would be an impossible task to construct such an equation of labour time as would bring out a unit of labour that would be even approximately uniform.

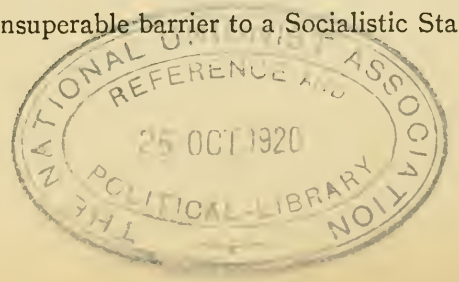
The whole system of State bookkeeping would be rendered exceedingly difficult. The certificate of labour time would have to be presented by the workers to the salesmen at the State Stores, and when a purchase was made the certificate would be endorsed to the effect that commodities equivalent to so much labour had been duly delivered to the worker. Thus, suppose a full week's work to consist of forty hours, the labourer who had put in full time would set out on Saturday on a shopping expedition armed with this certificate for forty hours. He might call at the butcher's department and spend two and a-half hours on pork for Sunday's dinner, whilst at the

grocer's he might purchase half an hour's worth of butter and twenty minutes worth of cheese. Perhaps he might enjoy the luxury of a shave at the State barbers, and pay ten minutes for that.

The children would clamour for thirty seconds' worth of toffee or ice cream, or if they were good and their father indulgent, he might even spend a full minute upon these luxuries.

Whatever the number of his purchases, they must be endorsed upon his certificate of labour time. What a large certificate it would have to be, and how nice and clean it would look after it returned from its travels, and perhaps the last ten minutes unexpended or reserved for the collection in church or chapel. How ridiculous it sounds. Certainly it does, because it *is* ridiculous, and, moreover, the best laid schemes of the cleverest men are equally ridiculous when they are arbitrarily devised to take the place of those natural laws which govern the civilized community.

Many other difficulties in the way of Socialism will suggest themselves to you, but I need not prolong this chapter further. "The strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link." Any one of the difficulties I have mentioned will prove an insuperable barrier to a Socialistic State.



CHAPTER IV.

SOCIALISM NO NEW THING.

THE Socialists are now claiming to be the only true progressive party in the State, and they dub the other great historic parties re-actionary and non-progressive.

This is amusing because Socialism is not progressive but retrogressive. The present competitive system of Society has been slowly evolved in accordance with natural laws. The State of Society from which we have gradually emerged was Socialistic. History will support me in this statement. Most savage tribes were Socialists. They had their goods in common, and the produce of the chase was divided amongst the whole tribe. As they became more ingenious and the first approach to civilization commenced, these tribes recognized that as the result of the chase was uncertain, it would be a good idea to domesticate a number of animals, so that they could readily be slaughtered for food when the necessities of the tribe demanded it. Afterwards they realized that it would be desirable to cultivate the soil. This was done also, and it was first done on Socialistic lines

by the community for the community. It was everybody's business and nobody's business. However, the light was spreading and civilization advancing. It became plain even to the untutored savage that the land would be cultivated better and the output of the soil would be greater *if it belonged to somebody*. They saw also that the domestic animals would thrive better and be looked after better if they also belonged to somebody. It was a startling fact, but nevertheless true, and it soon became possible for individual members of the tribe to possess each one his little plot of land and his small herd of cattle.

When this truth was recognized and acted upon, civilization advanced rapidly. Now, remember this fact, for it is a fact, *a recognition of the rights of private property is a fundamental necessity in any civilized society.* Where the rights of private property have been most efficiently protected by the State and most jealously safeguarded by the individual, civilization has advanced most rapidly. The most progressive communities to-day are those in which these conditions obtain, whilst the most backward and uncivilized communities are those in which least regard is paid to the rights of the individual. This is not merely a coincidence; it is natural and inevitable. A large number of Socialistic experiments have been tried. Numbers of enthusiasts have banded themselves together and formed Socialist communities. Of most of

these experiments it may be said that where they failed they succeeded, but where they succeeded they failed. This is paradoxical but true. Where a Socialist community was small, and each individual worker could readily appreciate the fact that by labouring for the community with all his energy he was also benefiting himself, and that he profited by the labour of others, just as others profited by his labour—then to some extent the experiment was successful. But if a Socialist community does not add to its numbers, it will gradually dwindle and die. Where, however, these communities grew in numbers, the individual worker lost sight of any personal benefit from his labours, and became possessed of the idea that he was working solely for others, many of them lazy or incapable, and that his industry was making up for their deficiencies, although he himself derived no greater reward. Naturally, then, he slackened his efforts and the community was doomed. Where these communities did not grow—*i.e.*, where they failed—they to some extent succeeded. Where they did grow—*i.e.*, where they succeeded —they failed, as a majority became lazy and thriftless. This was a perfectly natural result, and is not to be wondered at; but does it not prove that Socialism in itself carries with it the germ of failure? It is inherent to the system. In 1848 Louis Blanc conducted a great Socialist experiment in Paris. He gathered together fifteen

hundred tailors in the Hôtel Clichy, which was converted from a debtors' gaol into a great national tailors' shop. The Government gave their practical sympathy to the undertaking. They made the building suitable for the purpose without charge. They demanded no rent, they furnished the capital without interest, and gave an order to commence with for twenty-five thousand uniforms for the National Guard, to be followed by more for the Garde Mobile, and then others for the regular troops. Surely these were extremely favourable conditions, and yet the experiment failed. The contract price was eleven francs for each uniform. It was decided to pay each worker two francs per day until the contract was completed, and the Government advanced the money for this purpose. Upon the delivery of the uniforms, the Government were immediately to pay the contract price, less the amount advanced in order to pay the men two francs per day. After deducting the amount thus paid to each worker for subsistence the balance was to be divided. But alas! there was no balance. The contract took so long to complete, that the men had received—even at the low rate of two francs per day—more than the contract price. The result was a loss. The outcome of this experiment surely shows that equal reward for unequal labour is neither just nor profitable. Each unit in this army of fifteen hundred tailors felt that even if he worked his

hardest, the result would not come in the form of profit for himself, but would be spread over the whole of his co-workers. And this was not a sufficient incentive to induce energetic labour. The same result would take place in any community large or small, in a private concern or in a State workshop if the system of uniformity of payment, irrespective of the value of service rendered, were adopted. The industrious workman will not put forth his best efforts when the man who works by his side does far less work, and yet receives the same rate of pay. Where payment is by results, the best workman gets the best bargain; he earns most, and can save money. Where payment is equal and work unequal the worst workman gets the best bargain. *He* does least, and yet gets as much as anybody else. Robert Owen organized a Socialist community at Yellow Springs, U.S.A., and the majority of its members belonged to a superior class, but even Owen's enthusiasm and genius could not avert failure. One of the members of this community, in stating the causes of its failure, says: "The industrious, the skilful, and the strong saw the products of their labour enjoyed by the indolent, the unskilled, and the improvident, and self-love rose against benevolence. A band of musicians insisted that their brassy harmony was as necessary to the common happiness as bread and meat, and declined to enter the harvest-field or the workshop. A

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lecturer on natural science insisted upon talking whilst others worked. Mechanics whose day's labour brought two dollars into the common stock insisted that they should in justice work only half as long as the agriculturist whose day's work brought only one."

History tells us of numerous Socialist communities which have been formed and afterwards dissolved. Sometimes they flourished for a while, but in those cases it was owing to the members of the community being united by some strong religious belief which increased their ardour and promoted enthusiasm. The small Utopias have been failures. The larger they grew, the greater and the more certain was that failure. And yet the Socialist argues that the principles which spelt ruin on a small scale would mean wealth and prosperity if tried on a large scale by a community, which should include the entire nation.

You take a certain medicine and find that your malady increases instead of decreases, but the Socialist argues that if you take a larger quantity of the same drug which has already half-poisoned you, you will be perfectly well.

CHAPTER V.

HOW IS A SOCIALIST STATE TO BE REALIZED?

ARE the landlords and capitalists to be forcibly deprived of their property by Act of Parliament? Will the State buy their property, or will the State gradually make the holding of private property so onerous and unprofitable that nobody will want it? Each method is advocated by different Socialist writers and speakers.

Let us consider each method in turn. Suppose a law were to be passed through both Houses of Parliament providing that upon a certain definite date all private property was to be confiscated for State purposes, what would be the result? Most certainly bloodshed and armed revolution. As I pointed out in a previous chapter, such a measure would not only affect the wealthy and leisured classes, but all the more thrifty and industrious working men, and those who were members of trades unions, co-operative societies, benefit societies, building societies, etc., as well as the man who owned a small allotment or had saved up sufficient to purchase the house in which he lived. All these would fiercely resent a

measure which robbed them of the fruits of their thrift and industry for the benefit of the idle or incapable, and with the support of their friends they would resolutely defend their own. And they would be right. Parliament may have the power to pass such a measure, but it certainly has no moral right to do so, and this plan would be found impossible.

Shall the State buy out the landlords and capitalists? If so, at what price? The only fair price would be the market price. The market price is the sum which the property—whether land, buildings, stocks or shares, machinery, or any other form of property, would fetch in the open market. In order to make such a large purchase the State would have to borrow the money, and for such a purpose would have to pay four or five per cent. interest at least.

In that case the revenue from the property would not cover the interest and the enormous expenses of collection.

Take the case of land and buildings. Agricultural land in England only brings in a return on an average of about two and a half per cent., and freehold dwelling-houses not more than five or six per cent. on an average. The State would have to collect all rents, and out of the rental pay the enormous army of official rent collectors, keep the property in repair, and also pay interest on the money borrowed for purchasing the pro-

perty. This would more than absorb the rental, and therefore the State would lose, and not gain, by the bargain.

We must remember that a great number of landlords only make their investments profitable by collecting rents and looking after their property themselves. They would not give their services to the State, but would have to be replaced by expensive and far less efficient State officials. The mills, warehouses, and machinery purchased by the State could not be worked by the State as efficiently as they are carried on by private enterprise, and here also there would certainly be a loss. I think, therefore, we may safely dismiss this second method of bringing about State Socialism as impracticable.

The third method is to gradually raise the taxes on the income from all private property until they equal the revenue. The landlord would find that he merely collected his rents and had to pay them over to the State in the shape of taxes, without having a penny left for himself. He would therefore be glad to make over his property to the State without any purchase price.

The investor in stocks and shares would at last find that his income-tax on these investments was equal to his dividends, and he also would be glad to get rid of his property.

How beautifully ingenious, how perfectly fair.

Observe, my friends, there would be no robbery about this method. The property owner would gladly give up his property *voluntarily* because of the onerous taxation upon it. Who said robbery? Who whispered a more polite term—confiscation? "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," and robbery by the State or by the individual, dignified by a less offensive title, would still be robbery just the same, and I don't believe "the man in the street" will uphold it.

But softly! there is yet another plan, more insidious, more plausible, by which the Socialists hope to attain their ends. They are gradually attaining their objects without the majority of the electors being aware of it. They are attacking the municipalities. In almost every town or city council election there are Socialist candidates who seek election upon the municipal body in order to propagate their creed.

Many cities have municipalized the gas and water supply, and carry on the tramways with more or less success, and these are adduced by the Socialist as successful experiments on Socialist lines. If gas, water, and trams can be managed by the municipality, then why not coal, boots, milk, clothes, dwelling-houses, toffee-shops, and everything else.

When all industries in a certain town or city have been taken over by the municipality, and

every citizen is an employee of the Corporation, why not hand over everything to the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, and hey! presto! before you know where you are, State Socialism will be in full swing.

This is the programme, then. What has the municipal elector to say to it? In the first place, gas, water, and tramway undertakings are not managed as successfully as they might be by the various municipal corporations who have taken over their control. The London County Council may be cited as an example of how not to do it, and the electorate pronounced very decisively against their Socialistic experiments. Assuming (and it is a very large assumption) that Town or City Councils can carry on the gas, water, and tramway undertakings more successfully than they could be managed by private enterprise, it is no argument for Socialism, and the management of these undertakings by the corporate authorities is no object lesson in Socialism. These undertakings are and must of necessity be monopolies. They were private monopolies before they were taken over by the municipalities, and they existed as a result of private and not municipal enterprise. If we had waited for the municipalities to commence these undertakings and bring them to their present state of efficiency, we should probably have had to wait a long time. Be that as it may, the fact remains that they were monopolies under private

enterprise, and they remain monopolies when carried on by the various municipal corporations. They are therefore no object lesson in Socialism. To give us such an object lesson the Socialists must point out some business in which several private firms competed to supply the public demand, but which has been municipalized and become a monopoly to the advantage of the public. They must substitute a monopoly for free and open competition, and prove that the public benefit. I defy them to do this. We will suppose, however, that the process of municipalization is allowed to go on. Besides gas, water, trams, etc., we municipalize the coal trade, milk trade, boot trade, and take over the butchers, bakers, grocers, and clothiers' shops, and also all the mills and workshops. The process will not be carried very far before several great dangers to the public welfare will appear. To municipalize these undertakings even gradually and one at a time will cost money. That money must be borrowed by the municipalities who will issue bonds or stock, which will be a charge upon the rates and municipal buildings both as regards principal and interest.

At one time corporation stocks were looked upon as an absolutely safe investment for trustees and others who were willing to invest money at a low rate of interest in order to obtain absolute security. In proportion as these corporations are ceasing to confine themselves to their legitimate

business, and are seeking to acquire and carry on hazardous undertakings, this element of security becomes less, and the investor looks with smaller favour upon corporation bonds and stocks.

As the process of municipalization goes on, as first one trading concern and then another is taken over and managed by the municipality, the investor will demand a higher and yet a higher rate of interest as the security of his investment becomes more questionable. This interest and also periodical repayments of the principal will have to be met out of the rates, and this means heavier rates for the already overburdened ratepayer.

Heavy rates do not attract capital to any town or city, but rather drive it away. Heavy rates deter the capitalist from commencing business and erecting mills and workshops in any locality where these burdens upon his enterprise exist. This means stagnation in business, and a lack of employment for the working classes. In many localities large business firms have either closed their establishments altogether or transferred some departments to other places where the rates are not so high. Perhaps they have transferred their capital abroad, and are employing foreign workpeople. I can give a definite instance of one firm who transferred part of their business to the United States of America. There the different municipal bodies competed with one another to

induce the firm to erect their mills within their boundaries and to employ their citizens as work-people. In the locality in which the business was eventually commenced, the firm mentioned were exempt from any rates at all for the first seven years. This method encourages the influx of capital, and means steady employment for the working classes. High rates mean business stagnation and unemployment. Carry on the process of municipalization and increase the rates a little more, and you will kill the goose which lays the golden egg.

But you may say triumphantly, there is a fallacy in my argument. Why should the rates be increased to pay interest on money borrowed by the municipalities to carry on these trading concerns? Cannot the profits be utilized for this purpose? Well, the profits will be problematical, and should there be any, the Socialist will not allow you to touch them. Consider for a moment what little chance there would be of the municipality taking over any business and making as much profit from it as was formerly made by the owner. Take an engineering establishment, for instance. This business which had formerly been managed by the owner, who devoted his best efforts to developing the business and increasing its profits, would now be controlled by a Corporation Committee of butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers. Is it conceivable that these men would

be able to carry on the engineering business profitably? Of course they would appoint an expert official as head of the engineering department, but officials are only human, and it is not likely that any official would devote the time, energy, and skill to the business which it obtained from its former owner. The owner gave his best both of skill and energy, and had his reward in the shape of profit, but the official will not be dependent upon results. Even if there is a loss, his salary will still be paid, for are there not the inexhaustible rates from which to draw?

Mr. F. W. Jowett, M.P., in a little work entitled *The Socialist and the City*, says:—"The representative who poses as a departmental specialist takes away the responsibility from the expert official and is in a privileged position which enables him to carry his own schemes and plans to the exclusion, sometimes, of better ones. . . . A builder is the last person who should be appointed chairman of a building committee, and no more unfortunate person could be selected to administer an electricity department than an amateur electrician." In other words, the less a committee man knows about his department the better. I suppose that when he has been a member for a few years and picked up a little technical knowledge, he should be transferred to some other department of whose working he knows nothing, and where his ideal condition of ignorance would

be most useful. According to Mr. Jowett, if Corporation trading is to be successful, the building committee should consist of butchers and greengrocers, the electricity committee of worsted spinners and drapers, and the engineering committee of tobacconists and lawyers, whilst the builders, electricians, and engineers could profitably manage a dyehouse or run the municipal milk supply. Mr. Jowett is not quite fair when he talks about the presence upon the electricity committee of an "amateur" electrician. Why should he be an amateur? Are there no properly qualified men in business as electrical engineers, and may not some of them have an ambition to be members of the City Council? I am inclined to think so, and also that such a man would be invaluable upon the electricity committee, where he would be a salutary check upon that arrogance and carelessness which officials rapidly acquire when they are controlled only by those who must accept all their statements as gospel and endorse all their actions.

Under municipal Socialism, then, according to Mr. Jowett, Corporation committees would know nothing about the departments committed to their charge, but must leave matters to the expert officials. Is this principle carried out when directors are chosen to serve on large public companies. I think not. It must then be admitted that the profits of municipal departments

are at least problematical. But assuming that profits are made, you must not lay sacrilegious hands upon them in order to relieve the poor, struggling ratepayer. Oh! dear no, that would be against the sacred principles of Socialism.

What has Mr. Jowett to say upon the matter? "The Socialist view of the fair way of dealing with profits on trading concerns is to have none —if one may be excused for so paradoxical a statement. Fair wages and good conditions generally for the employed, and *selling at cost*, so that all may use freely the commodity or service, is the nearest approach to justice in respect to such municipal concerns as are incapable of being used with equal freedom by all." Strange to say, Mr. Jowett, I do not agree with you. Take the city of Bradford, for instance, and see how the argument works out. The majority of the population live within a mile and a half of the town hall, and use the trams very seldom. Yet these people are helping to pay to carry others to the outskirts of the town at a heavy loss. Some people never use the tramways at all, some use electricity but not gas, many use gas but not electricity. All, however, are ratepayers, directly or indirectly. Surely, then, instead of selling these commodities at cost, it would be more just to make a reasonable profit, which should be used in relief of rates. If the gasworks were to be blown up, who would have to bear the loss?

Not simply the gas consumers, but the whole of the ratepayers. If the tramway system broke down, and the electricity works were destroyed by fire, the ratepayers, and not the users of these commodities, would be called upon to make good the loss. The ratepayers take all the risk, and are therefore entitled to some profit. The principle of the Socialist, however, is to sell at cost and let the ratepayer take care of himself.

Another grave danger which will menace us during our progress towards municipal Socialism consists of the vast increase in the number of those who are employed by the Corporation.

In some wards in Bradford at the present time the tramwaymen and other Corporation employees can turn the scale in favour of any candidate they choose. They can, and frequently do this, and their votes are not cast in favour of or against some great principle of municipal policy, but entirely used to secure more favourable conditions for themselves—viz., shorter hours of labour, higher wages, etc.

We can easily see that when the majority of the electors throughout all the wards of the city were in the employ of the Corporation, the municipal elections would not turn upon questions of public policy at all, but entirely upon the wage question. Smith and Jones are opposing candidates. Smith promises one shilling per week advance in wages to Corporation employees and

sixpence per week reduction of rent to tenants in the municipal dwelling-houses. Jones promises two shillings advance in wages and one shilling reduction of rent. Can any reasonable man doubt which of these two candidates would be elected? The only way out of the danger would be to disfranchise all Corporation employees, which no political party would be bold enough to propose. And so the competition would go on. Higher wages, shorter hours, lower rents, no profits.

Where is the money to come from?

Why, out of the inexhaustible rates, of course! Only one thing will check the triumphant progress of municipal Socialism. We shall be ruined before we get there. Be of good courage, my masters; truly a splendid prospect lies before us. The capitalist and employer of labour may leave us, but we shall all be happy in this Socialist elysium, and make a good living by taking in each other's washing.

CHAPTER VI.

SOCIALISM AND THE FAMILY.

THE Englishman's home is his castle. This is a somewhat hackneyed saying, but when it is no longer true this England of ours will not be worth living in. I also venture to think that when the average Englishman realizes how Socialism would insidiously encroach upon and then finally destroy home and family life, he will have none of it, for he would be surrendering almost sacred privileges, for which no amount of ease and luxury could compensate him. Attack family life and you are attacking the greatest asset of the nation.

Better is a one-roomed hovel and poverty with that privacy which alone renders family intercourse possible, than a corner in a gilded palace where crowds herd together in piggish promiscuity. And yet Socialism must and does logically mean the destruction of family life, filial love, and marital affection. Under Socialism both sexes will be required for industrial labour, and both will be rewarded equally. Woman will be no longer economically dependent upon man, and

will no longer be content to fulfil domestic duties. Woman's sphere is essentially the home, but under Socialism she will take an active place with man in the great industrial armies. Even Socialists themselves sometimes recognize this. Mr. Hobson, in his *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, says: "The growth of factory work among women has brought with it inevitably a weakening of home interests and a neglect of home duties. Home work is consciously slighted as secondary in importance and inferior because it brings no wages, and, if not neglected, is performed in a perfunctory manner, which robs it of its grace and value. This narrowing of the home as a place of hurried meals and sleep is, on the whole, the worst injury modern industry has inflicted on our lives, and it is difficult to see how it can be compensated by any increase of material products. Factory life for women, save in extremely rare cases, saps the physical and moral health of the family. The exigencies of factory life are inconsistent with the position of a good mother, a good wife, or the maker of a home."

Surely if this is true now, when a comparatively small number of wives and mothers are compelled to take part in industrial labour, how much more extensive will be the evil when all are expected to do so. When both father and mother are workers, it will be impossible to maintain the separate family home. Neither will it be possible for

mothers to give due care to their children, who will, therefore, be handed over to the care of the State as soon as practicable after birth. Yet home duties must be performed, children must be cared for, and the only way out of the difficulty is the institution of State kitchens and dining-rooms and also State nurseries. Home would be simply a place in which to sleep, and even this would in time be found inconvenient. Separate family establishments would be abolished, and the people would be housed in huge barracks where home life would be absolutely impossible.

All this is a logical and inevitable result of applying Socialistic principles. Do not take my word for it, but allow me to quote from a few Socialist writers. Mr. W. H. Dixon says:—"The very first conception of a Socialistic State is such a relation of the sexes as shall prevent men and women from falling into selfish family groups. *Family life is eternally at war with Socialistic life.* When you have a private household you must have private property to feed it, hence a community of goods; the first idea of a Socialistic State has been found in every case to imply a community of children and to promote a community of wives."

Now we must go a step further. Abolition of family life and family intercourse will naturally lead to a re-arrangement with regard to the relationship of the sexes. In most Socialist

experiments those who had no children objected very strongly to labour in order to support other people's children. But under State Socialism there will be a community of children, and, as Mr. Dixon points out, this will in the end lead to a community of wives. Upon this point many Socialist writers are extremely outspoken. Herr Bebel says: "Human beings must be in a position to act as freely where their strongest impulse is concerned as in the case of any other natural instinct. The gratification of the sexual impulse is as strictly the personal affair of the individual as the gratification of any other natural instinct. All these checks, all these contradictions to nature in the present position of women have led even persons who are not disposed to accept the further consequences of change in our present Social state to recognize the justifiability of a perfectly free choice in love, and, if need be, of an equally free dissolution of the relationship, without any external hindrance."

Edward Carpenter writes:—"Perhaps the most decent thing in true marriage would be to say nothing, make no promises either for a year or for a lifetime. . . . It would be felt intolerable in any decently constituted society that the old blunderbuss of the law should interfere in the delicate relations of married life."

Karl Pearsen says:—"In a Socialist form of government the sexual relation would vary accord-

ing to the feelings and wants of individuals. Children apart, we hold it intolerable that Church or Society should in any official form interfere with lovers."

Now what is the outcome of this teaching? Stripped of all unnecessary verbiage, it means free love, promiscuous sexual intercourse, the disappearance of the family, and State support for all the unfortunate and unwelcome infants. I want the "man in the street" to realize clearly and unmistakably the whole meaning of this dirty business. And let it be distinctly understood that when the State takes so much upon itself it will have to take more. As children will be the property of the State, it necessarily follows that the number of births will be regulated by the State. Only the physically fit will be allowed to beget children, as it is not conceivable that the State will cheerfully support the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Those who are physically fit will have no choice in the matter, and let them not think that they will be allowed to select their own mates. Scientific principles will be applied. Men and women will be selected for breeding purposes, just as we now select horses and cattle. This will be a natural and logical consequence of an arbitrary interference by the State. And what does it amount to? Degradation. A return to animalism. An arrest of a beneficent natural evolution. *Naturally* children do not belong to

the State, but to their parents. *Naturally* the parents should provide for and have the training of their children. *Naturally* monogamy has come to be recognized as the ideal relationship of the sexes, and the sacredness and purity of family life has become the best guarantee for the growth of a healthy and vigorous national life. The human race has a nobler, purer, and cleaner destiny than the coarse materialism and gross ideals of a Socialist State. Such a State would die out in a few generations because it is not natural, and any interference with nature brings with it an inevitable punishment.

A monogamic marriage state is a fundamental necessity to human progress towards a nobler ideal, and if Socialist principles are against this, then so much the worse for those principles, for they cannot possibly endure. Let us make no mistake about it. There is a distinct cleavage between Socialists and Individualists upon this question. According to the Socialist, the family exists for the State; according to the Individualist, the State exists to guard and protect the family.

Which is right? The electors of this country will have to answer the question, and I hope they will do so with no uncertain voice.

We have said very little about the children. What will be their position under Socialism? Separated from their parents and transferred to

the State nursery at an early age, there will be no opportunity for the development of parental or filial love. Surely it is no small thing to deprive the parents of parental joys and responsibilities; and all the resources of the State cannot atone to the child for the loss of its mother's love. Father, mother, and child—all three must suffer under Socialism, both in loss of happiness and also as regards development of character. The parents would lose the refining influence which follows upon the self-sacrifice and self-restraint which the training of children naturally brings forth. The child in its dawning intelligence cannot prattle to and ask questions of the State nurses. It would have to submit to discipline, it would have to obey rules. All children would have to undergo a stereotyped course of training, and be turned out like bullets from a mould without any individual characteristics. How could the State child know what love meant, and how could anything compensate him for the lack of that knowledge? God help him! Surely such an unnatural system can never commend itself to the British people. Away with such teaching! Surely, as far as the child is concerned, the family is better than the herd, the mother is better than the stepmother, and the State official is worst of all. Let the "man in the street" awake from his apathy; the enemy is within our gates. We have to fight against an

insidious foe who would destroy the purity of marriage, the sanctity of family life, and would render impossible the exercise of the noblest and the most Godlike instincts which the Almighty has conferred upon us.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

THERE is a good deal of loose talk at the present day about Christian Socialism. Many of those who describe themselves as Christian Socialists simply mean that as Christians they recognize that they have a duty to perform towards Society. They wish to leave the community better than they found it, and they are endeavouring to carry out their Christian principles in political matters by supporting Social reforms. But, surely, we can be Christians in politics without calling ourselves Socialists also. If there is to be a party of Christian Socialists, why not also Christian Conservatives and Christian Liberals? The term "Christian" is altogether out of place. A man may be either Liberal, Conservative, or Socialist, and at the same time be a Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Theosophist. When a man states himself to be a Christian Socialist, the natural assumption is that he belongs to a subdivision of the Socialist party, the main body of Socialists not being Christians; or that all Socialists are Christians, whilst members of the

other political parties have no right to the title. Some men who are enthusiastic Socialists, but whose religious belief is of a very political nature, are careful to call themselves Christian Socialists in order to attract support from religious people who know very little about Socialism, and who could not support it if they did.

Thus we have a mean attempt to throw the cloak of religion over what is essentially a political propaganda. Of course, the real Socialists know very well that this so-called Christian Socialism is not Socialism at all, and that when a well-meaning clergyman preaches on the necessity for Christians to fulfil their social obligations and duties, he is simply preaching doctrines which no Christian would deny, and which can be expounded just as enthusiastically without the said clergyman dragging in the word "socialism."

As a matter of fact, Christian Socialism is *not* Socialism at all, and those who adopt this title are simply playing into the hands of the real Socialists, who use them as pawns in the political game which they are playing. To my mind, Christianity and Socialism are contradictory terms. To talk about Christian Socialism is just as sensible as talking about dry water or cold heat. The two systems are absolutely opposed to one another. Christianity aims at the regeneration of society through the individual, which is practical, although it may be slow.

Socialism aims at the regeneration of the individual through society, which is impracticable and ridiculous. The fundamental basis of Christianity is self-sacrifice. The Christian must deny himself for the sake of others, even if he foregoes just rights and privileges. The Socialist preaches to the great majority the gospel of Grab. "Stand up for your rights!" he cries; "you are being defrauded of wealth which is justly yours. See that you get your share, even if you have to fight for it."

Under Socialism only the few would be called upon to exercise the Christian virtue of self-sacrifice in order to appease the cupidity of the many. Christianity is for the individual; Socialism is for the mob. Christianity may touch the heart of the man and cause his whole life to be nobler and better, because he as an individual has of his own free will accepted Christianity. He believes in it, and tries to follow out its teaching, is ready to undergo pain and hardship if necessary for the faith which is in him. God speaks to man as an individual. Man cannot be made moral, industrious, sober, and unselfish by Act of Parliament or because the majority in a Socialist State has decreeed that he must be so. But he may be all these if he have faith and courage. God judges the value of our actions by our motives. A man may live decently and honestly although he would like to be filthy and

dishonest, but dare not. This man's righteousness will be as filthy rags in the sight of the Almighty. Under Socialism, if a man conforms to the rules which the State has devised to regulate and control his actions, he has done all that is necessary. Under Socialism, there will be very little scope for free will and the exercise of individual initiative. The State will regulate all and control all. But you cannot have true Christianity without the greatest freedom of choice on the part of the individual. No man can be truly moral unless he has the chance to be immoral. No man can be unselfish, unless he has the opportunity to be wholly selfish. No man can be good unless he deliberately and of his own free will rejects evil. No man can be truly Christ-like if he has had no chance to be thoroughly devilish. Under Socialism, our actions will be regulated, directed, controlled, and automatic. There will be very little scope for the free exercise of natural impulse. There will be no opportunity for doing much good, and no chance to do very great evil. Under these circumstances, there will be very little hope for the development and growth of Christian principles in the individual. For charity, help, sympathy, and encouragement we now look to those who love us and the exercise of these virtues is mutually beneficial. The quality of mercy is twice blessed; it blesseth him that giveth and him that receiveth. Under Socialism, instead of the voluntary self-

sacrifice by which men help each other and by which the bonds of friendship are cemented, we shall in all difficulties be directed to apply to some State official. Under individualism, the wife looks up to, and depends upon, her husband, and the child depends upon the self-sacrifice of its parents. Thus marital and filial love is born and fostered, and it is strengthened by the trials and difficulties with which the family have to contend. Under Socialism, each member of the family would owe everything to the State, and nothing to members of the family group. Is it likely that under such circumstances family affection and brotherly love will continue? The State will be all in all, Father, Mother, Husband, Wife, Brother, and Sister. These tender relationships as we know them now will no longer exist. The members of the family will be simply co-pensioners upon the resources of the State.

How, then, can there be Christian Socialism? A State in which there is very little scope for friendship, affection, and love, and where each individual will be chiefly concerned in seeing that he gets his due share of the total wealth of the community, surely is a most unpromising soil for the growth of Christianity and the spreading of Christian principles.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIALISM AND SLAVERY.

THE establishment of Socialism means farewell to freedom. State control and State interference must always result to a greater or lesser extent in the loss of personal liberty. I do not deny that under the existing system a man is not altogether a free agent, but at the same time, he is not under despotic control.

A workman has the right to sell his labour to the best advantage, and to transfer himself from one employer to another, and from one kind of employment to another whenever he feels inclined. His employer does not say to him, "Do this work, or I will compel you to do it," but "Do this work or leave my employ, and I will get somebody else who will do it." If the employer adopted the first plan, the workman would be in the position of a slave, but as it is, although he may be impelled by the force of circumstances to work when he has no wish to do so, he retains his personal liberty.

He can stop working if he likes. No one will

interfere to prevent him, but he must take the consequences.

Socialism, however, would change all this. Each man would daily have to perform the task allotted to him. No preference would be allowed to be exercised. All labour would be done by industrial and agricultural armies under State control. And the existence of these armies would necessitate officials to direct and supervise them. In such a vast organization the discipline would have to be rigidly severe. The rank and file would have to obey the orders of the corporals and sergeants, who would in turn be responsible to the captains of industry. The captains also would be subordinate to the majors, colonels, generals, and the commander-in-chief of the labour army. Throughout all this vast industrial organization implicit obedience would be sternly demanded and rigidly enforced. "Perform your appointed task and take your prescribed rations." This would be the unalterable law. What a bureaucratic despotism the Socialist State will be. Officialism will rule with a rod of iron, but what will be the position of the actual workers?

Already, on the Continent, where the State has usurped much greater power than in England, and where the Governmental organizations are more coercive than ours, we have chronic complaints of official tyranny and brutality. If the yoke of officialism is irksome now, when only the

more public actions of citizens are interfered with, how unbearably galling will it prove to a liberty-loving people when all their daily duties are supervised and directed and controlled?

We should also bear in mind the almost invariable tendency of State officials to support one another.

The complaints and grievances of the workers will stand but little chance of obtaining redress. The vast army of officials will be united by common interests—the interest of the regulators against those of the regulated. Whenever those interests are conflicting, the officials will have it in their power to quickly suppress any insubordination, or any outward manifestations of discontent.

The workers in a Socialist community will be in a far worse position as regards individual liberty than the subjects of the most despotic sovereign that ever existed. "Not so," replies the Socialist; "the sovereign is an irresponsible tyrant, but the State officials will be elected from the ranks of the people, and, being representatives of the people, the masses will really be governing themselves." As a matter of theory this may be so, and yet the tyranny be none the less severe. The real point of issue is not as to the agency of the despotism but as to whether despotism exists or not. We must ask whether or not the lives of the citizens will be greatly interfered with, and not so much as to the agency which interferes with them. If the

people elect a despot to rule over them, do they remain free because the despotism was of their own making?

Similarly, if they elect a vast army of official despots, their slavery will be just as real and their bondage will be quite as irksome although they themselves, voluntarily, entered into a state of bondage. Living under a grinding tyranny, it will be small consolation to reflect that the tyranny was of their own creation.

Slavery is an integral part of the system of Socialism, and it matters not to the Slave whether his master is a private individual or a state official. A free labourer can work or abstain from work as he chooses. He receives a wage, and after his day's labour is ended his employer has no control over him. A slave, however, must work when his master chooses; he receives no monetary renumeration, but is fed and clothed by his master in return for his labour. *This is exactly the position of the worker under Socialism.* Let him not think that he will be able to choose his task or to lightly change from one task to another should the first prove distateful.

In the *Fabian Essays* we read:—

"Another difficulty which will meet us, though not immediately, is the competition for employment in certain pleasanter branches of industry. At present an unemployed person would catch eagerly at the chance of any well-paid work he was able to perform.

If he were able both to set type and to stitch coats, he would not dream of grumbling if he were by chance offered the job he liked less of the two: he would be only too glad to get either. But it is quite possible that as the vast amelioration of life conditions proceeds, Jeshurun will wax fat and kick if, when he prefers to make microscopic lenses, he is desired to make mirrors. Under these circumstances Jeshurun will, I fear, have to accommodate himself to the demand. If the number of people engaged in making lenses suffices to meet the demand for lenses, Jeshurun must consent to turn his talents for the time to mirror making."

In other words, he must do as he is told. If he wishes to make mirrors he may be sent to clean out the gutters, or if he prefers to be an architect he may have to be a pork butcher.

The majority in a Socialist State will take the place of Almighty God, and the officials will enforce upon the minority the behests of King Demos.

I can conceive of no worse slavery than this. The heart of a tyrant may be softened, and the worst despot has his conciliatory moments, but the rule of the majority — perhaps a small majority—will be rigid and unalterable.

Why should the majority take the place of God? History shows us that the majority is not always right. From Jesus Christ and his disciples, all through the ages the very highest moral actions

have been performed in spite of the strongest opposition on the part of the majority of the community. Why then should we regulate our life and conduct by the decision of the majority? It is vulgar, unnatural, and slavish, and the free man will have none of it. He could not breathe in such an atmosphere after inhaling the refreshing air of liberty.

But under Socialism, liberty must die. The members of a Socialist community must not only submit to have their actions controlled, but their speech also would be subject to restrictions. Free expression of individual opinion, either on the platform or through the medium of the press, would not from the very nature of Socialism be tolerated. All means by which it was possible to attract the attention and gain the ear of the public would be under the control of the State. It is not reasonable to suppose that a Socialist Government would provide halls in which its adversaries might hold meetings and agitate for its overthrow. Neither would it print books and pamphlets to show that its methods were mischievous and cumbersome. Neither would it give the charge of newspapers and public journals to men who might use these powerful organs to stir up public feeling in favour of a return to Individualism. In short, not only would a man have to act as the State told him to act, but he would also have to think as the State wanted him to think, or else

deny himself the free man's privilege of expressing his thoughts.

In such a community, in which liberty of thought and action is strictly suppressed, in which originality is discouraged, and individual enterprise becomes a crime, a dreary dead level would be the ideal condition of society. The officials would speedily become tyrannous despots, and the workers would degenerate into dull, unthinking automata, without energy for labour or capacity for enjoyment.

Is this a system under which we as Englishmen could contentedly live? No one with any knowledge of the National Character can answer, Yes!

Our forefathers struggled against the usurping tyranny of the crown and the arrogant despotism of the Romish Church, and as long as the British people retain that resolute perseverance and dogged determination which characterized their ancestors, they will submit neither to the capricious sway of a crowned despot nor to the grinding tyranny of a Socialist régime.

CHAPTER IX.

SOCIALISM AND PATRIOTISM.

JUST as the opium-eater or the devotee of laudanum becomes mentally incapable of taking a rational view of any question, so the man who has absorbed Socialistic opinions becomes incapable of considering Imperial matters from a sane and healthy standpoint. Socialists wish to impose upon Society an unnatural system of government, and it is not to be wondered at that the more deeply tinged by Socialism a man becomes the more strained and unnatural is his attitude towards great public questions.

A man who lived in a hothouse would shiver when exposed to healthy moorland breezes, and a man who breathes the artificial atmosphere of Socialism feels not only unappreciative, but absolutely distressed when he witnesses any great outburst of national enthusiasm. Socialists are the friends of every country but their own. They endeavour to be cosmopolitan and broad-minded, but only succeed in being parochial and weak-kneed. When the British army, assisted by the

Colonial troops, was fighting for the very life-blood of the British Empire, during the Boer war, prominent Socialists, M.P.'s, and others were vilifying our brave soldiers, and openly sympathizing with the enemy. The Socialist was naturally a pro-Boer, just as he would be a pro-German or pro-Russian if we were at war with either of those nations. I do not blame him for it. He cannot help himself. His opinions are the inevitable outcome of the diseased condition of his mind. The natural man thinks first of his own wife, his own family, his own home, his own country, and if necessary will fight to defend them.

Throughout the whole of animated nature the same principle applies. Even beasts and birds will defend their own mates, offspring, and dwelling-places. The Socialist is the only exception, and this is because he has no proper place in nature. "Why should a man prefer his own country?" asks the Socialist. "We are citizens of the world. Why should a man prefer his own wife, children, or household? Let the State support his wife, train his children, and house them in barracks instead of allowing them the selfish seclusion of a home. Are we not all members of the community, and is not one man as good as another, and no man's wife and family better than those of any one else?"

To any one holding these opinions, true patri-

otism is impossible. If the Socialist party obtained a majority in Parliament we could not trust them to maintain the honour and integrity of the Empire. They would be too busily engaged in robbing the thrifty and industrious in order to satisfy the cupidity of the mob. Our glorious Empire would appear to them but a barren thing and a useless heritage.

Let the man in the street answer a straight question. Is he prepared to sacrifice the Empire, to part with our Colonies, and to see England become a fifth-rate Power without voice or influence in the councils of the nations? If not, then he must be prepared to fight for the honour of his country and the safety of the Empire, not only against foreign aggressors, but against more insidious foes within our gates. He must not dally with Socialism, for he cannot serve two masters. He can either be a Socialist or a patriot, but he cannot be both. It will be a bad day for England if he choose the former. Socialism brings with it a lack of manly self-reliance and a weak dependence upon the State. Like indulgence in a noxious drug, it saps the manhood and virility of the nation. Let us have none of it. We desire neither slavery nor licence, for England's Mission of Empire is not yet accomplished, and it must be carried out by a strong, vigorous, and manly race:—a race possessing faith in God, faith in themselves and their own exertions, and faith in

the Imperial destiny of a brave, generous, hard-working, virile, and healthy people.

"Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,
Baulking the end, half won, for an instant dole of praise
Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword and pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men, in a world of men."—KIPLING.

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